70 1205.

Compaſſion the duty and dignity of man; and cruelty the diſgrace of his nature.

A

SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THAT BRANCH OF

BRITISH COMMERCE

WHICH EXTENDS TO THE

HUMAN SPECIES.

PREACHED TO A CONGREGATION OF

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

IN HULL,

JANUARY 21ſt, 1789.

BY JOHN BEATSON.

"They took them captives, held them faſt, and refuſed to let them go. "Jeremiah, LI. 33."

"O my ſoul, come not thou into their ſecret; unto their aſſembly mine "honour be not thou united. Geneſis, XLIX. 6."

HULL:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY G. PRINCE, AND SOLD BY MESSRS. ROBINSONS IN LONDON, T. BROWNE, HULL, J. TODD, YORK, AND J. BINNS, LEEDS.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

FROM much ſerious thought on that branch of Britiſh commerce, which relates to the human ſpecies, and from a full conviction of its inhumanity and injuſtice, the author was prompted to bear an open teſtimony againſt it, not only from the pulpit but alſo from the preſs. He cannot indeed, from perſonal knowledge, add any thing to that body of information, reſpecting the cruelty of this unnatural commerce, which is now laid before the public—nor, if he could, does he think it neceſſary: but it is his intention to prove, as clearly as he can, its groſs immorality, its palpable contradiction to every Chriſtian principle, and to every generous ſentiment that can occupy the mind of man. Nor, when he ſpeaks thus, would he be underſtood to mean any unneceſſary cruelties, which may be inflicted by individuals engaged in this employ;—whether in the capture or purchaſe of the objects of this commerce, in the courſe of their voyage to the place of ſale, or after they have arrived at their deſtined abodes.

Adventitious circumſtances of this kind might be regulated, and yet the commerce itſelf remain intrinſically the ſame. It is the reducing of men to involuntary ſlavery, by a people whom they have never injured, with all the train of miſeries they muſt neceſſarily feel, in being forced into ſuch a ſtate, and afterwards kept there contrary to their will; it is this procedure *in its own nature*, independent of the cruelties which almoſt neceſſarily grow out of it, which is the object he has immediately in view. The immorality of the traffic *itſelf*, viewed in its faireſt light, and not the unfeeling manner of conducting it, forms the ſubject of the following pages.

The author has a conſcious pleaſure in the thought, that none of the numerous mercantile gentlemen in this town, have any concern in ſo iniquitous a traffic; and that the port of Hull is unſtained with human blood. It gives him additional pleaſure to perceive that the attention of numbers here, as well as in other places, is now turned towards this object,—their indignation excited by the inhumanity, injuſtice, and infamy of the practice,—and, that the general opinion is, The trade ſhould be wholly exterminated.

There is one doubt however, he has heard ſometimes hinted at, which has been matter of aſtoniſhment to him. The doubt is, Whether it would not be impolicy to aboliſh ſuch a trade? As tho' the principles of juſtice, humanity, and ſound policy were at variance! Or as tho' any thing could conduce to the true intereſts of any deſcription of men, which was neither juſt nor humane in its nature! It cannot be. Fallacy is at the bottom of all ſuch reaſoning; and nothing more is requiſite to its complete refutation, than that the caſe be fairly argued. Indeed, ſeriouſly to deliberate on a plan, for the regulation of injuſtice and oppreſſion, ſeems wholly incompatible with every principle both of honour and of conſcience. It is degrading to human nature, and ſhews that the mind is warped from the ſtandard of rectitude.

A SERMON

A

SERMON, &c.

BRETHREN,

MY intention in addreſſing you at preſent, is,—to plead the cauſe of humanity and juſtice,—to turn your attention to a practice, which, I conceive, to be directly ſubverſive of thoſe principles,—to excite your deteſtation of ſuch a procedure, and to engage you to uſe your utmoſt endeavours in order to obtain its final abolition.

The practice I allude to, is that part of Britiſh commerce, which conſiſts in buying and ſelling the *human ſpecies*; a practice, in my view, ſo repugnant to every idea of compaſſion and juſtice, ſo diſgraceful in itſelf, and ſo dangerous in its conſequences, that it deſerves to be reprobated in the ſevereſt terms.

The paſſage of ſcripture I have ſelected as the baſis of my diſcourſe is the following:

LUKE X. 29. *Who is my neighbour?*

A queſtion like this, in the preſent ſtate of things among *us*, may ſeem, to ſome perſons, in a

great meaſure if not wholly ſuperfluous. What individual, perhaps it will be aſked, in this enlightened land, where ſo much liberality of ſentiment prevails,—What individual can be ſo ignorant, as not to know who he is to conſider as his neighbour, and how he ought to act the part of a neighbour?"

We are to remember, however, that the perſon who propoſed this queſtion was a Jew; and tho' he was a ſcribe, or a lawyer, by profeſſion, yet, it is moſt probable, that, like the generality of his countrymen, he was greatly confined in his notions, and had not the moſt diſtant idea that he was under any obligation to extend his kindneſs, beyond the boundaries of his own country.

Perſuaded, as it ſeems from the context, of the integrity and perfection of his character,—not in the leaſt doubting either his knowledge of the duties incumbent on him, or his having properly performed thoſe duties,—"willing to juſtify himſelf," to vindicate his own character and conduct, and to have it thought he was not defective in his practice of benevolence, he propoſed the queſtion before us,—Who is my neighbour?

With a view to correct any miſtake on the ſubject, which this Jewiſh lawyer might have fallen into,—to correct ſimilar miſtakes in every period of time, in conſequence of which a wrong conduct too often prevails, and to convey a clear and vivid idea both of whom we ſhould conſider

in

in the light of neighbours, and how we ought to act the part of a neighbour, our Lord gave the the following beautiful deſcription.

"A certain *man* went down from Jeruſalem to "Jericho, and fell among thieves, which ſtripped "him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and de-"parted, leaving him half dead. And by chance "there came down a certain prieſt that way; and "when he ſaw him, he paſſed by on the other ſide. "And likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the "place, came and looked *on him*, and paſſed by "on the other ſide. But a certain Samaritan, as "he journeyed, came where he was; and when "he ſaw him, he had compaſſion *on him*, and "went to him, and bound up his wounds, pour-"ing in oil and wine, and ſet him on his own "beaſt, and brought him to an inn, and took "care of him. And on the morrow, when he "departed, he took out two pence, and gave "*them* to the hoſt, and ſaid unto him, Take care "of him; and whatſoever thou ſpendeſt more, "when I come again, I will repay thee. Which "now of theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neigh-"bour unto him that fell among the thieves? "And he ſaid, He that ſhewed mercy on him. "Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou "likewiſe."

Thus by an appeal to the feelings of human nature, in the various circumſtances of the narrative before us, hath our Lord inſtructed us in this important

important truth: THAT COMPASSION IS THE DUTY AND DIGNITY OF MAN, AND CRUELTY THE DISGRACE OF OUR NATURE.

Who can look at the picture held up to us in this parable, without at once perceiving, that, in the odious characters of the Prieſt and the Levite, diſgrace is thrown, not on an important office only, but alſo on the very nature of man? Who can ſee theſe inhuman beings (tho' by profeſſion teachers of humanity) coming to the place where the miſerable object lay, and both paſſing by on the other ſide, without either ſtretching out a hand to aſſiſt, or uttering a word to comfort him in his diſtreſs,—who can ſee ſo cruel a neglect of complicated miſery, and not feel indignation excited in his breaſt?

On the other hand, Who can look at the portrait of the Samaritan traveller, and not ſee dignity in every feature? Forgetting every national antipathy,—forgetting every difference in religious opinion, no ſooner did he perceive a *fellow-mortal* in diſtreſs, than he immediately ſtretched out the hand of benevolence; and, as far as lay in his power, adminiſtred relief to the diſtreſſed object. In this noble inſtance of compaſſion then, the Samaritan hath ſtamped a dignity on the nature of man; tho' he did no more, even in this memorable inſtance, than what was his "duty to do." With peculiar propriety however did Jeſus add, "Go, and do thou likewiſe."

Having

Having now given a brief illuſtration of the parable, as an anſwer to the queſtion propoſed in the text, what I have further in view, is,—to make ſome obſervations on the ſubject in general, which appear to me to grow naturally out of it, and which will, I hope, be thought adapted to the preſent occaſion.—The obſervations I would make are the four following:

1. That mankind in general, deriving their origin from the ſame ſource, and partaking of the ſame common nature, are under peculiar obligations to exerciſe a mutual regard, independent of complexion, language, country, religion, or any other tye to the offices of kindneſs.

2. That if either any individuals, or collective bodies of men, inſtead of exerciſing this regard, uſe the ſuperior wiſdom, or power, or wealth, which the Supreme Governor has conferred on them, not for the happineſs, but for the miſery of their fellow-men; in every inſtance of this kind they act not as neighbours, but as enemies; and, by conſequence, violate the law of humanity and juſtice.

3. That tho' ſuch a violation of the Divine law, may be permitted for a ſeaſon, and on the ſide of the oppreſſors there may be power and proſperity, yet a period will come, when the Supreme Ruler of the whole earth will puniſh ſuch individuals, or collective bodies of men, in proportion to the magnitude and demerit of their crimes.

4. And

4. And therefore, in the laſt place, that it becomes every wiſe and good man,—every lover of God and of his country, where ſuch violations of the Divine law are open and avowed, to exert himſelf with vigour in every lawful, peaceable, and prudent method, in order to ſuppreſs ſo flagrant a procedure; that the puniſhment denounced againſt ſuch crimes may be averted, and the rights of humanity and juſtice held ſacred and inviolable.

The proof and illuſtration of theſe remarks, ſhall conſtitute the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe.

I. The firſt obſervation is,—that mankind in general, deriving their origin from the ſame ſource, and partaking of the ſame common nature, are under peculiar obligations to the exerciſe of mutual regard, independent of complexion, language, country, religion, or any other tye to the offices of kindneſs.

Did not men, indeed, originate from the ſame ſource,—did they not partake of the ſame common nature,—were the inhabitants of different and diſtant countries really of different ſpecies,—then it might be argued with ſome degree of plauſibility, that they are not entitled to ſuch a regard. Yet, even in this caſe, if cruelty to brute animals be contrary to the will of the Great Creator, and if ſuch a procedure be a diſgrace to any individual who is found in the practice

of

of it; ſurely a ſimilar procedure with reſpect to the human ſpecies, admitting that their capacity for enjoying pleaſure and ſuffering pain were not exactly equal, muſt be much more offenſive and much more diſgraceful.

But, the idea thrown out by ſome modern philoſophers, that there are diſtinct races of men, and that theſe are eſſentially different one from another, can never be admitted even for a moment, by thoſe who believe in Divine revelation. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one "God created us*?" Hath not the ſame Almighty Former of men, "made of ONE BLOOD "all nations†?" And are not all theſe nations equally "HIS OFFSPRING‡?"—Theſe are queſtions, which, I think, carry their own evidence along with them, and fix the point on an immoveable baſis.

Independent however of Divine revelation, the differences that ſubſiſt among the various nations of the world, with regard to complexion, exterior appearance, or mental endowments, may be accounted for in a ſatisfactory manner, from various natural and combined cauſes, which are ſufficiently powerful to effect thoſe differences, without recurring to the wild ſuppoſition of different races of human beings. Influence of climate, habits of life, difference of food, modes of education, and various other accidental circumſtances, are

* Malachi, ii. 10. † Acts, xvii. 26. ‡ Acts, xvii 28.

are powerfully operative, and adequate to the production of all the changes obſervable in the human ſpecies.

If then it be a fact, that men derive their origin from the ſame ſource,—partake of the ſame common nature,—are equally poſſeſſed of immortal ſouls, and endued with the ſame faculties for enjoying pleaſure and ſuffering pain, does it not follow as an undeniable conſequence, that they ought to exerciſe a mutual regard?

To advance a ſtep further in this argument: Are we not under obligation to exerciſe the offices of kindneſs, independent of complexion, language, country, religion, or any other tye than that ſtrongeſt of all relations,—*one common nature*? That I am a *man*, poſſeſſed of the feelings of a man, capable of partaking of the pleaſures of a man, and liable to the miſeries incident to man, is a ſufficient reaſon of itſelf, to entitle me to the regard of my fellow-men. That another is a *man*, poſſeſſed of the ſame feelings, capable of enjoying the ſame pleaſures, and liable to the ſame miſeries, as myſelf;—tho' he ſhould be of a different complexion, or language, or country, or religion, or even all theſe united;—yet, that he is a *man*, is a ſufficient reaſon why I ſhould behave to him in a friendly manner. I may add, that, if he be a man involved in calamity, there needs no other reaſon why he ſhould be the object of my compaſſionate regard.

That

That men may diſcover a greater degree of reſpect to ſome of their fellow-men than they do to others, I have not the ſmalleſt doubt. In many caſes, I believe, that we *ought* to do this. Wiſdom, and juſtice, and mercy, are God-like qualities; which, where they exiſt in a ſuperior degree, claim a ſuperior degree of regard.

Beſides, there is a love of our country, and of thoſe we are connected with in a civil or political capacity, which is proper and laudable, and ought to be cultivated by each individual. But the point I contend for is, That men, *as men*, ought to be treated in a juſt, and (when the caſe requires it) in a compaſſionate manner. Nor can any right ever be ſhewn, either by individuals or communities, to inflict pain or diſgrace on their fellow-men, where no juſt cauſe of provocation has been given.

On this broad ground of mutual regard, ariſing from equality of nature, the practice which has long prevailed among us, of extending our commerce to the *human ſpecies*,—the practice of buying and ſelling *men*,—and men too who have never done us the ſmalleſt imaginable injury, muſt be utterly condemned, both as being wholly unjuſtifiable, and abſolutely incompatible with any benevolent principle.

Some of you, perhaps, will ſcarcely believe (tho' to others it is well known) that, for more than a century paſt, it has been cuſtomary to fit

out ſhips from different ports of this kingdom,—to ſend them to the coaſt of Africa, and to convey thence, annually (at leaſt of late years) thirty or forty thouſand of its unoffending inhabitants, to diſtant, and to them unknown countries.

You will ſcarcely believe that this large number (ſome few *criminals* perhaps excepted) are ſeized by the hand of violence,—torn from their deareſt connexions and relations,—put on board our ſhips in the ſtate of malefactors,—faſt bound in fetters of iron,—expoſed to every indecency and inſult during the voyage,—and, when they arrive at the deſtined port, expoſed to ſale in an open market, as we expoſe our cattle, to be ſold—AS SLAVES FOR LIFE.

Think not that it is my intention in the leaſt to exaggerate this affair. No: for the credit of my country, for the credit of humanity, I would wiſh, conſiſtent with truth, to ſet it in the faireſt light. When however I conſider that theſe unhappy men, women, and children, are ſuddenly torn from their families and friends, and violently wrenched from their native ſoil:——When I reflect on the ſeverity neceſſary to be uſed in order to *compel* them to quit thoſe endeared objects, and the ſubſequent ſeverity which it ſeems equally neceſſary to exerciſe for the ſafety of the ſhip's company after they are put aboard,—the cloſe ſtowage that has generally taken place during the voyage, with a view to carry as great a

number

number as poſſible,—the rapid waſte of life as the natural conſequence of this,—the frequent ſeparation of huſbands and wives, parents and children, when they arrive at the place of ſale,—and finally, the cruelties inflicted on them by many unfeeling maſters, to make them work beyond what they have ever been accumſtomed to, and even beyond their ſtrength:—when I conſider theſe various particulars in the treatment of our fellow-men, all of which ſeem naturally to grow out of *the trade itſelf*, and to be inſeparable from it, I muſt totally condemn it as ſubverſive of every right that pertains to the nature of man.

I would not have a ſlave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I ſleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That ſinews bought and ſold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Juſt eſtimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myſelf the ſlave
And wear the bonds, than faſten them on him*.

A noble ſentiment: worthy to be adopted by every individual. Did it univerſally prevail, traffic in the human ſpecies would not only be aboliſhed; it would be held in the utmoſt deteſtation, and hiſſed out of the world as an execrable object.

II. The

* COWPER's Poems;---A poet with whoſe writings I have been highly gratified; and am of opinion, that, for originality of thought, elevation of ſentiment, juſtneſs of deſcription, and variety of imagery, he ſtands unequalled among his contemporaries.

II. The ſecond obſervation deducible from the text is this: That if either any individuals, or collective bodies of men, uſe the ſuperior wiſdom, power, or wealth, which the Supreme Governor has endued them with,—not in promoting the happineſs, but for the oppreſſion of their fellow-men, in every ſuch inſtance they act not as *neighbours*, but as enemies; and, by conſequence, violate the laws of humanity and juſtice.

In this obſervation it is taken for granted, that tho' mankind derive their origin from the ſame ſource, and partake of the ſame common nature, yet both in their natural and acquired qualifications, as well as in their exterior ſituation and circumſtances, a conſiderable difference ſubſiſts amongſt them. Some individuals are formed with ſuperior talents to others, have minds more expanded, and are qualified to take a lead even among thoſe that are born and educated in the ſame country, and who have had every advantage equally with them.

But tho' this be the fact with reſpect to individuals, ſtill taking men as collective bodies, whatever privileges ſome of them may enjoy, as to ſuperior modes of education, happineſs of government, or others of a ſimilar nature, in their natural capacity they are nearly, if not wholly equal. There is, for inſtance, no ſolid reaſon to think, that the intellectual faculties of the inhabitants of Africa, are at all inferior to thoſe of

the

the Europeans, or than thoſe of the inhabitants of any other part of the globe. Suppoſe a given number of them were, in a ſtate of infancy, to be brought into England, trained up according to our mode of education, and familiariſed to our habits of life, there can be no reaſonable doubt, I preſume, but they would, in all the various branches of ſcience, be equal to a ſimilar number born of Engliſh parents.

With regard to their being capable of moral inſtruction, and even of being made wiſe to ſalvation, we have a remarkable inſtance in the New-Teſtament hiſtory, in the caſe of the Ethiopian eunuch, treaſurer to Candace queen of the Ethiopians*. This man had come from a conſiderable diſtance to worſhip at Jeruſalem. He had done this, no doubt, from a conviction that the worſhip performed at Jeruſalem was of Divine appointment, and therefore peculiarly acceptable in its nature. On his return, while he was reading the prophecy of Iſaiah, a ſpecial meſſenger was ſent to him by Divine authority, to give him ſome further inſtruction relating to the way of pardon and peace, by the ſufferings and death of Chriſt.

Now from this hiſtorical fact ſeveral queſtions, by no means foreign to the ſubject in hand, naturally ariſe. Was not this man an African? Was he not capable of reading the ſcriptures in the

* Acts, viii. 26. to the end.

the Hebrew language? When Philip addreſſed him as a meſſenger of peace,—when from the very paſſage he was reading he "preached to him Jeſus," did not the Eunuch appear as capable of attending to his reaſoning as any individual among ourſelves? When he was convinced of a particular branch of Chriſtian duty, did he not with the greateſt promptitude expreſs his deſire to be found in the obſervance of it? And is not this a proof that the Africans, as well as others, are capable of underſtanding Divine truth, and a preſage that the period will come when "Ethiopia "ſhall ſtretch out her hands unto God*?" Then, at leaſt, will their ſlavery be aboliſhed.

But to return from this ſhort digreſſion: it is aſſumed farther in the obſervation I have made, that what advantages ſoever, natural or acquired, either individuals or nations poſſeſs, in conſequence of birth, climate, government, or a concurrence of other circumſtances, all theſe are favours conferred on them by the Supreme Ruler of the Univerſe, and intended to promote the happineſs of mankind. It is "the God of heaven "who giveth wiſdom to the wiſe, and knowledge "to them that know underſtanding†." As government is the inſtitution of God, ſo the diſtribution that he makes of his favours, with reſpect to individuals, clearly proves, that the ſuperiority of ſome and the ſubordination of others are principles included in the original deſign of creation.

Beſides,

* Pſalm. lxviii. 31. † Daniel, ii. 19, 21.

Beſides, there are ſome nations, as well as individuals, that are favoured in a diſtinguiſhed manner. On comparing their ſituation and enjoyments with thoſe of other nations, they have reaſon to adopt that grateful ſentiment, "the "lines are fallen to us in pleaſant places; we "have a goodly heritage." The nation that has ſuch a government as reſpects the liberty and property of the people, allows the rights of conſcience, adminiſters juſtice impartially, and puts all under the equal protection of law;—the nation that has ſuch a government is raiſed to a preeminence above many others. If, in addition to theſe civil privileges, ſuch a nation be favoured with the light of Divine revelation,—if the "glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God" be publiſhed throughout its boundaries,—if numbers openly avow their attachment to this goſpel, and are ſecured in that avowal under the protection of law;—then we may affirm with propriety, "happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe."

It ſhould never be forgotten however, that any advantages conferred on ſome individuals, or nations above others, are intended to promote the happineſs of mankind. If then theſe gifts of the Great Common Parent of men be abuſed,—if inſtead of being employed for the benefit, they are exerted for the oppreſſion of thoſe we ſhould eſteem as brethren, for inflicting pain and miſery on them, ſurely the poſſeſſors of thoſe

gifts

gifts do not behave in the amiable character of neighbours, but rather in the odious one of tyrants or oppreſſors.

Now nothing can be clearer, I think, than that ſuch a procedure is a direct violation of that law, which, by way of eminence, may be ſtiled the law of humanity and juſtice; it is a flagrant departure from that rule of moral conduct, preſcribed to men by the Majeſty of heaven. Nothing more, I apprehend, is neceſſary to ſubſtantiate this fact, than an examination of the law itſelf, and an application of it as a rule, to meaſure the behaviour that men ought to hold one towards another.

The law which forms the rule of our conduct with reſpect to men, is comprized in this ſhort ſentence,—"Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as "thyſelf." We have the ſentiment a little more dilated, and the conduct we ſhould hold farther illuſtrated, in that clear expoſition of the law which our Lord has given us, in what is commonly called his ſermon on the mount. In one part of that expoſitory diſcourſe, he eſtabliſhes this principle: "All things whatſoever ye would that men "ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them;" and he aſſigns a reaſon, "for this is the law and "the prophets*."

Now this is a rule ſo clear that none can miſtake its meaning, ſo comprehenſive that it includes

* Matthew, vii. 12.

cludes every individual of mankind, and ſo equitable that every man's own conſcience, at once, pronounces it to be right. No individual can miſtake the meaning of the law; for, who is there ſo devoid of judgement and feeling, that, if he were deprived of his liberty, torn from his deareſt connexions and country, and ſold into a foreign land as a ſlave for life, would not be conſcious that an irreparable injury was done to him, and that the law of love had been ſhamefully violated? There is not, I am decidedly of opinion, any individual among you, whoſe feelings would not be ſhocked at ſuch a procedure, and who would not have an inſtantaneous perception that ſuch a practice ought not to exiſt.

One argument in favour of human ſlavery, as it relates to the unhappy Africans, has been drawn from the better treatment they meet with from their Weſt-Indian, or American maſters, than they had been accuſtomed to in their own country. Suppoſe we admit this (which is far from being true) might it not be aſked, What is the reaſon why they meet with ſuch ill treatment in their own country? And would not the proper anſwer be, The avarice of the Europeans!

From this inordinate thirſt of gain, they have deviſed means to induce ſeveral of the Princes of Africa to enſlave their ſubjects, and to wage unnatural and unjuſt wars one againſt another: ſo that in an extent of coaſt of ſome thouſand miles,

and within land of many hundreds, they live in a ſtate of perpetual hoſtility. Will not the guilt of thoſe wars fall principally on thoſe that offer the inducements? And are not we, as a people, the chief aggreſſors?

Might it not be aſked again, What right has one man to judge for another, as to the ſhare of happineſs that he enjoys? Or what right has any individual, to take another by violence from what he may deem a ſtate of miſery, and place him in a foreign land, even ſuppoſing that his intentions in this were good? No right of this kind can ever be produced. Why then ſhould it ever be exerciſed?

In order to ſet this ſort of conduct in a true light, we need only to meaſure it by the rule above-ſpecified, of doing to others as we would they ſhould do to us. For example: Would any humane treatment you might poſſibly meet with in a foreign land, after being deprived of your perſonal liberty,—rent from all that was dear to you,—conveyed in fetters to a diſtant and unknown country,—ſold on your arrival there, to be taſked for life, without any ſtipulated condition on your part, and without any hope of regaining your freedom,—wholly under the will and caprice of a ſtranger, and put in a great meaſure out of the protection of law;—would any humane treatment you might meet with, compatible with this ſtate of ſlavery, compenſate for the loſs of ſuch privileges,

of

of all in ſhort that you held dear in your heart? It would not. You feel it would not. You would languiſh for your former enjoyments. Exiſtence itſelf would become a burden; and you would wiſh for death to terminate your miſery. Why then act thus with reſpect to others, who have preciſely the ſame feelings, and are, as it were, caſt in the ſame mould, as we ourſelves?

This infamous traffic then of man with man, being ſo flagrant a violation of the law of love to our neighbour, and ſuch an outrage on the very ſpirit and genius of the goſpel, can never be ſupported by any reaſoning, but what is degrading to the perſon who uſes it. Arguments drawn either from the permiſſion of the practice in the earlier and darker ages of the world,—from the ſilence of the New Teſtament with reſpect to the abolition of it,—or from the ſuppoſed advantages that may accrue from ſo iniquitous a barter,—arguments drawn from theſe or ſimilar ſources, are light as air, when put in competition with the equitable law of God, and the benevolent ſpirit of the goſpel. Why then not put an end to ſo ſinful a traffic?

Beſides, the very ſtate of ſlavery itſelf, is a ſtate ſo improper, ſo degrading, ſo ruinous to the feelings and capacities of human nature, that it ought not, by any nation favoured with the light of the goſpel, to be ſuffered to exiſt even for a moment.

We

We have no ſlaves at home. Then why abroad?
And they themſelves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country and their ſhackles fall.
That's noble, and beſpeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the bleſſing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire. That where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

COWPER.

It is in truth the felicity as well as the glory of England, that ſlavery is unknown among us: for, there are principles in the nature of man which make it nearly, if not wholly, as improper that any ſhould be the maſter of ſlaves, as that he ſhould be reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery. If a ſtate of ſlavery be degrading to the nature of man, and reduces him below the ſtandard of his powers, it is not leſs true that the power which a maſter of ſlaves habitually exerciſes, operates greatly to his diſadvantage. It naturally tends to make him haughty, cruel, vindictive, and to excite a certain ſavageneſs of diſpoſition and conduct. Thus by debaſing his nature, it renders him unfit for the ſociety of his equals; and, in ſome caſes, by begetting a turn for wanton cruelty, makes him an object of deteſtation and horror.

Nor doesthis traffic operate leſs unfavourably on the men in general who are actively concerned in conducting it. Indeed perſons can ſcarcely

engage

engage in ſcenes of this nature, till they diſcard every generous feeling, and become callous to the complaints of human woe. Should a man however enter on ſuch an employ with a common portion of ſenſibility, yet the very traffic itſelf has a direct tendency to ſtifle every humane diſpoſition, and to produce a ferocious and an unfeeling mind. What a dreadful effect!—yet it is an effect produced naturally, and perhaps neceſſarily, from being habituated to ſuch violent acts of cruelty, and accuſtomed to the ſhrieks of agonizing grief. Why then not put an end to theſe unnatural diſtinctions of maſter and ſlave? Why continue a practice which is ſo uncongenial to the nature of man,—ſo unfriendly to his beſt diſpoſitions?

Before we quit this part of the ſubject, it may be proper to aſk, What injury have theſe unhappy Africans done to us, what crime have they been guilty of, that calls for ſo ſevere and unexampled a puniſhment? Have they invaded our country? No. Have they obſtructed our commerce? No. Have they violated any treaty? No. Have they offended you either by word or deed? They have not. You know they have not. Why then treat them in ſo cruel a manner?

Some perhaps will reply (for what replies will not ſome men make!) ſome intereſted perſons perhaps will reply, "They are only negroes, deſtined to ſlavery by Divine appointment." Negroes!

groes! What do you mean by the term? You intend it, I imagine, as a term of degradation, if not of infamy. You would by this invidious appellation cut the link of brotherhood, and have it thought that the blood of ſuch men is not congenial with your own, but that they are marked for ſlavery. Alas! Alas!

" You find your fellow guilty of a ſkin
" Not colour'd like your own, and having power
" T' inforce the wrong, for ſuch a worthy cauſe
" Doom and devote him as your lawful prey.—

COWPER.

But, ſuppoſing that ſome opprobious appellation were fixed on us, taken from our colour or exterior appearance, and for this reaſon we were treated as an inferior ſpecies in the rank of beings, and, like the beaſts we uſe, were on that account doomed to be the mere inſtruments of ſevere labour, having no will of our own, and wholly under the lawleſs diſcretion of a ſtranger: Should we not feel that an eſſential injury was done to us? Should we not be conſcious that our juſt and native rights were violently encroached on? Moſt certainly we ſhould. Apply the rule then; and if ye would not that others ſhould act thus to you, no longer act in the ſame manner to them.

But " they are deſtined to ſlavery by Divine " appointment; and therefore we do no more, by " our treatment of them, than accompliſh the " will

"will of heaven, and verify an ancient prediction "reſpecting this event." Theſe Africans, it is affirmed, are the poſterity of Ham, who became an object of the Divine diſpleaſure, and whoſe deſcendants, for that reaſon, were doomed to ſervitude*. This denunciation however was limited to the poſterity of Canaan, and deciſive proof can be produced that it has had its full effect, and was, at fartheſt, completely finiſhed at the deſtruction of Carthage. But, admitting that we were fulfilling a prophecy by enſlaving theſe unhappy Africans, would this in the leaſt diminiſh our guilt? Did we engage in this trade with the deſign of carrying the appointment of God into actual effect? Alas! ſo much to the contrary, that it is to be feared the perſons immediately concerned in conducting it, ſcarcely have God in all their thoughts.

It was predicted that Jeſus ſhould be crucified, according to "the determinate counſel and fore-"knowledge of God;" yet we are informed, that "by wicked hands" he was "taken, crucified and "ſlain†;" and all thoſe who took an active part in accompliſhing thoſe predictions, are ſtiled his "betrayers and murderers‡". Shall we not, by "the Judge of all the earth," be deemed the betrayers and murderers of thouſands of the inhabitants of Africa? Should ſuch a judgement be pronounced, what will be the conſequence?

But

* Geneſis, ix. 24, 27. † Acts, ii, 23. ‡ Acts, vii. 52.

But this leads me to the third obſervation, which is—

III. That tho' ſuch a violation of the Divine law may be permitted for a ſeaſon, and on the ſide of the oppreſſors there may be power and proſperity, yet a period will come, when the Supreme Governor will certainly puniſh ſuch individuals or collective bodies of men, in proportion to the magnitude and demerit of their crimes.

The "judgements" of God "are a great "deep:" the methods of the Divine procedure "in the adminiſtration of his government, are, in many inſtances, unſearchable by man: the reaſons on which they are founded are above the comprehenſion of our limited capacity. Among other inſtances of this nature, the tyranny and oppreſſion that we ſee exerciſed in the world, either by one individual over other individuals, or by one nation over other nations, is a deep unfathomable by any human line.

Paſſing over individual oppreſſors, however, I will mention a fact or two with reſpect to collective bodies of men. In what light are we to view the Roman people, whoſe name is ſo much celebrated in the page of hiſtory? Were they the friends of mankind? Did they reſpect the natural rights of men, and govern their conduct by the rule of equity? The whole of their hiſtory, in my apprehenſion, deciſively proves the reverſe to be

true.

true. It proves, I think, that they were a nation of tyrants and oppreſſors, who actuated by the keen thirſt of ambition and avarice, under ſome fallacious pretences to juſtice in their conduct, were perpetually murdering the ſurrounding nations, deſolating their reſpective countries, and were never ſatisfied with the extenſion of their dominion, ſo long as the power of extending it remained in their hands. They, like their predeceſſors of Babylon, Perſia, and Greece, have had their day, and it was a long one;—but it is now expired. We have read of the riſe, progreſs, and elevation of their empire: we have read alſo of its decline and fall. The vaſt extent of country which they conquered, has long been given into other hands, and they as a people have no more an exiſtence in the world.—Who regrets their extinction?

Happy would it be were there no reaſon to affirm, that we, as well as other nations of Europe, are too much imitating their example. I love my country: in many reſpects I think honourably of it; and deem myſelf under peculiar obligations to expreſs my gratitude to Him who has fixed "the bounds of our habitation," that I was born in the eighteenth century, under the preſent mild and equitable government.—I rejoice in its proſperity; its improving agriculture, its growing commerce, and its increaſing wealth. I admire the talents and eloquence of our ſenators,

equal I preſume, if not ſuperior, to what could be found in the ſenate of Rome, even in the zenith of its glory. I revere the equity diſpenſed from our ſeats of judgement, without any partial reſpect of perſons: I applaud the humanity and generoſity of my countrymen, in erecting and ſupporting ſo many ſtately buildings for the reception of the ſick, the lame, the blind, and every other object of human miſery; as well as their liberal contributions to the poor at large, on any temporary ſcenes of diſtreſs: above all, I rejoice in that high regard for liberty which glows almoſt in every breaſt, and the jealouſy entertained againſt any encroachments on it.

But how pleaſing ſoever it may be to dwell on the bright ſide of the portrait, there is another view to be taken of it which will deeply affect every feeling mind. To ſay nothing at preſent with regard to our Eaſt-India tranſactions, where ſcenes of cruelty have been long familiar, where many a fair province has been depopulated, and many a prince expelled from his throne;—paſſing over theſe ſcenes of deſolation and carnage, the perpetrators of which have never yet been puniſhed, I would fix your attention on the object we are more immediately conſidering; and aſk, Whether ſo flagrant a violation of the Divine law as the barbarous traffic above deſcribed, does not merit exemplary puniſhment? And farther, Whether there is not every reaſon to fear, that the

continuance

continuance of ſo infamous a commerce, will actually draw down the puniſhment it ſo juſtly merits?

The caſe of individuals I will at preſent paſs over, becauſe their puniſhment for the perſonal ſhare they have taken in ſuch a procedure, as well as for their other crimes, may be reſerved to the future world, to "the judgement of the great "day." It may not however be amiſs to remark, that we have ſcripture inſtances, even of individuals, being treated by the law of retaliation: witneſs, among others, the memorable inſtance in that monſter of cruelty, the Nero of his age, Adonizedek.*

Leaving individuals however to the reflections of their own conſciences, and to the period of final retribution, I will conſider the ſubject in a national view; and, in order that we may look at it in a proper light, we muſt have this idea in our recollection, That thoſe collective bodies of men which we call nations, are (if I may uſe the word) beings that have an exiſtence in this world only. As collective bodies, it is certain, they have no exiſtence in the future ſtate; for, in that ſtate, the whole race of men will be divided into two claſſes, the righteous and the wicked, nor will any other collective body have an exiſtence in the eternal world. Engliſhmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Italians, and all other nations of the globe,

* Judges, i.

globe, by whatever appellation they are known, that ever did, do now, or ſhall hereafter exiſt, will then no longer be known by their former names; but muſt mingle with the one or the other of thoſe two great collective bodies of men which I have juſt now ſpecified, and every other diſtinction will be for ever aboliſhed.

This then being the fact, the obvious concluſion is, that ſuch collective bodies of men muſt, in their national capacity, either be puniſhed in this world or not at all. What then may be expected in ſuch a caſe? Perhaps the following queſtions, with their proper anſwers, may throw a degree of light on the ſubject.

Is there not one Supreme Governor over all the nations of men, who "is righteous in all his "ways" and whoſe "tender mercies are over all "his works?" Hath not this Sovereign Ruler of all the earth, preſcribed a law to regulate the conduct of nations, as well as individuals one towards another; and muſt not this law, like all others of any value, be enforced by ſuitable penalties? Are not the penalties annexed to the violation of this law, a full return of ſufferings, in meaſure, if not in kind, to thoſe that have inflicted undeſerved ſufferings on others? Does not the paternal goodneſs and mercy of the common Father of all towards the oppreſſed, as well as his diſpleaſure againſt the oppreſſor, require the infliction of this puniſhment? and, finally,

finally, If nothing of this kind were to be collected from facts that appear on the face of the world, might it not be concluded, that the God of truth and of juſtice, of goodneſs and of mercy, was equally regardleſs of the crimes of the guilty, and of the ſufferings of the innocent?

Theſe are queſtions which, I conceive, are congenial to the ſentiments of every enlightened mind; and which few, if any, will be inclined to diſpute. If theſe then be indiſputable principles, is there not as much reaſon to believe, that oppreſſing nations ſhall be puniſhed, and the oppreſſed ones relieved, as to believe that the Supreme Majeſty is merciful and juſt?

We are not however left in this matter to the concluſions of reaſon merely, or to what the light and law of nature dictate: ſuperadded to theſe we have the will of the Almighty Sovereign expreſsly revealed, and written in ſuch legible characters that no attentive reader can miſtake its meaning. The law itſelf is founded in the equity and compaſſion of his own nature, and it is for ſubſtance the ſame as that which relates to individuals: "whatſoever ye would that men "ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them." Accordingly a woe is denounced againſt thoſe nations that violate this general rule. "Woe "to thee that ſpoileſt, and thou waſt not ſpoil-"ed; that dealeſt treacherouſly, and they dealt "not treacherouſly with thee."

The

The crime of this people was, that they inflicted injuries on others, from whom they had received none: they ſpoiled, when none had attempted to ſpoil them: they dealt treacherouſly, when others had not dealt treacherouſly with them. Now mark the conſequence, included in the following threatning: "when thou ſhalt ceaſe "to ſpoil,"—when thou ſhalt be effectually pre- "vented from injuring others, then "ſhalt thou "be ſpoiled;" "and when thou ſhalt make an end "to deal treacherouſly,"—when thy debility ſhall prevent thee from acting any further in this manner, then "they ſhall deal treacherouſly with "thee *." The period will come then, ſooner or later, when thoſe nations that have been engaged in ſcenes of treachery, deſolation, and blood,—and have perſiſted in ſuch a courſe after repeated admonitions of its guilt and danger, ſhall be arreſted by the hand of Omnipotence: and when that period is arrived, they will be dealt with by the law of retaliation, will be treated themſelves in meaſure, if not in kind, as they had been actively concerned in treating others.

Such is the penalty annexed to a violation of that law of nations, which the Great Ruler of them all hath eſtabliſhed, for the regulation of their conduct one towards another. Nor will he ſuffer any breach of this law to paſs over with impunity. His juſtice, goodneſs, truth, and faithfulneſs,

* Iſaiah, xxiii. 1.

faithfulneſs, are as much engaged to carry his threatnings into actual effect, againſt the tranſgreſſors of this law, as to accompliſh the promiſes he has made to thoſe that obſerve it.—"He" therefore "that leadeth into captivity, ſhall go "into captivity: he that killeth with the ſword, "muſt be killed with the ſword;* for the Lord "God of recompences ſhall ſurely requite †."

Thus hath the Supreme Governor plainly informed us, both of the law he has eſtabliſhed throughout the world, as the rule by which nations ſhould regulate their public meaſures, and of the penalties he will inflict on all thoſe nations, which, in defiance of his authority, openly violate that law. Whenever then a nation uſes its ſuperior wiſdom, power, or wealth, not for the happineſs, but for the oppreſſion of men,—when advantage is taken of the weakneſs of a people, whether they be nearer or more remote, without any juſt offence being given, and the ſuperior power is exerciſed to break into their country, to diſturb its happineſs, to deſtroy or carry off into captivity its unoffending inhabitants, and, when they come into a foreign land, to ſell or uſe them as beaſts of burden for life, is certainly a crime of the greateſt magnitude, being directly oppoſite to the will of the Great Creator. Such a conduct, indeed, appears to include in it every crime which one nation can be guilty of againſt another.

* Revelation, xiii. 10. † Jeremiah, li. 56.

another. If therefore a conduct of this nature were determinedly perſiſted in,—if the offence were often repeated,—and, if, inſtead of making any reparation for the injuries done;—the nation that was guilty reduced the whole to ſyſtem, and regulated it by law, would not ſuch a nation have every reaſon to expect, from the known juſtice and goodneſs of God, that they ſhould receive an adequate return?

The power and proſperity of ſuch a people may, indeed, be ſo great, of ſo long continuance, and apparently ſo deep-rooted, that, forgetting their dependence on God, and his all-powerful influence in the world, they may think themſelves ſecure from any return of puniſhment, and obſtinately perſiſt in the perpetration of their crimes. To check ſo preſumptuous a thought,—to imprint deeply on the minds of men the certainty of national puniſhment being inflicted for national crimes,—and to convince them that neither wiſdom, nor power, nor wealth, nor any height of grandeur to which they may be raiſed, can exempt them from ſuch puniſhment, or prevent its being actually inflicted, ſeveral examples are ſet before them in the ſacred hiſtory, of the deſtruction of the moſt powerful and opulent nations, who had abuſed the gifts of Divine Providence. Theſe are ſo many beacons placed full in view, to warn all future nations of the danger of pride, avarice, and oppreſſion; and they are ſo many proofs too,

drawn

drawn from facts, that the greateſt earthly power can ſoon be cruſhed by the hand of Omnipotence.

From theſe inſtances I will ſelect one; and I ſelect this the rather, becauſe there appears to be ſome affinity in it to the caſe we are at preſent conſidering. The inſtance I refer to is the deſtruction of Babylon, and the overthrow of that extenſive empire of which it was the renowned metropolis. The crime of this people was, principally at leaſt, the abuſe of power for the oppreſſion of the innocent. The charge brought againſt them by the Supreme Governor was, That they "took captives—held them faſt"—and "refuſed to let them go*." Theſe captives had not been guilty of any crime againſt their conquerors. They had done them no injury; much leſs any that merited ſo ſevere a puniſhment. Their captivity therefore was, in the firſt inſtance, cruel and unjuſt.—Add to this, they were detained in captivity for a conſiderable time; their oppreſſors "held them faſt". Perhaps every attempt to effect their liberty (tho' no more than what any men would do in a ſimilar caſe) was deemed rebellion; and, proving unſucceſsful, ſerved only to increaſe their miſery, and to rivet their fetters of captivity the faſter. Beſides, this captivity was continued after many remonſtrances had been made againſt it, and many petitions preſented, for their reſtoration to freedom. But their avaricious,

* Jeremiah, l. 33.

ricious, tyrannical, and cruel maſters, ſtill "refuſed to let them go."

Muſt, then, poor oppreſſed captives, exiles from their country, for ever continue in ſo degraded a ſituation? Though "on the ſide of their oppreſſors there is power," and the unjuſt exerciſe of this power be permitted for a ſeaſon, and even for a conſiderable length of time, Are we to conclude from this, that it ſhall continue for ever? Is there not "a God that judgeth in the earth*?" Is not this God "a father of the fatherleſs, and a judge of the widows†?" Does he not "deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor alſo, and him that hath no helper?" Will he not "redeem their ſoul from deceit and violence," and will not "their blood" be "precious in his ſight‡?"

All theſe queſtions carry a ſtrong, and undeniable affirmation in their nature, and prove beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, to all who believe the revealed will of God, that he will puniſh ſuch nations as have uſed their power and proſperity unjuſtly, in proportion to the magnitude and demerit of their crimes. Hence, after the Babylonians had been charged with carrying men into captivity, holding them faſt, and refuſing to let them go,—it is added "Their redeemer is ſtrong, the Lord of hoſts is his name, he ſhall thoroughly plead their cauſe,—and diſquiet the inhabitants

* Pſalm, lviii. 11. † Pſalm, lxviii. 5. ‡ Pſalm, lxxii. 12, 14.

"inhabitants of Babylon.*" Long had they been permitted to exerciſe injuſtice, and to extend the iron hand of oppreſſion,—long had other nations felt the weight of their power and groaned under the preſſure of complicated miſery: but the period was now come when Babylon ſhould be "recom-"penſed according to her work; according to all "that ſhe had done," ſo ſhould others "do to her." The conſequence is well known. The haughty oppreſſors were ſpeedily reduced to a ſtate of captivity, and a way open for the reſtoration of the ſighing captives to liberty. "The Lord God of "hoſts opened his armoury,—brought forth the "weapons of his indignation," and, as he had formerly overthrown Sodom and Gomorrah, ſo was the Babylonian empire totally demoliſhed, and its proud metropolis laid in ruins. From ſuch inſtances we have demonſtrative proof, that the adminiſtration of the Divine government is perfectly equitable, tho' ſometimes the reaſons of it may be obſcure; and that oppreſſing nations, how powerful or proſperous ſoever they may be for a time, ſhall certainly be puniſhed for all their crimes.

Now theſe facts are recorded as a warning to other nations; that they may be excited to avoid a ſimilar procedure, as they would wiſh to avoid a ſimilar puniſhment. But when we compare our conduct

* Jeremiah, l. 33, 34. the whole chapter, as well as the following one, merits peruſal, as an example of the juſtice, goodneſs, and power, of the Divine Government over the world.

conduct as a nation, with that of this once celebrated Eastern empire, Is not the similarity too conspicuous? Have not we, for a long series of years, been destroying, and carrying into the most miserable captivity that was ever known, in the world, numbers of our fellow-men, who never gave us the least offence? Do we not "hold" these miserable captives "fast," and is not every effort they may make to regain their former liberty, called rebellion, and punished with the greatest severity? In a word, tho' we have long heard their cries of woe, tho' we have had the most authentic accounts of the unexampled miseries they suffer, and though numbers in the land have shed the tear of sympathy at the review of their distress, and have earnestly pleaded for their deliverance,—yet have not we as a people hitherto "refused to let them go?" And do we not still continue so horrid a traffic?

This then being the fact, it surely is a matter of serious inquiry, In what light our conduct is beheld by the infinitely just and compassionate Ruler of the world. Can he behold it with approbation? To think thus, would be much the same thing as to think, that the God of justice and compassion neither regarded the "groaning of the "prisoner," nor detested the deeds of oppression. But, Is this the case? We have seen that it is not. Still is God "a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows." Still does he continue

tinue to be the patron of the oppreſſed, and the foe of the oppreſſors. He muſt then behold our national conduct in the ſame light, as he has beheld a ſimilar conduct in other nations; and we have every reaſon to conclude, that, as ſurely as he puniſhed thoſe nations for their crimes, ſo ſurely will he puniſh us, if we perſiſt in a ſimilar procedure. How, or when, this puniſhment will be inflicted it would be preſumption to ſay: it may be inflicted in our time, to prevent the bad influence of our example being extended; or it may be ſuſpended to the next, or a more diſtant age: but as certainly as there is a juſt and a compaſſionate Ruler of men, ſo certainly will juſtice be done to the guilty, and compaſſion ſhewn to the oppreſſed; and ſo certainly will our crime of enſlaving the unhappy Africans (were there no other) if perſiſted in, be puniſhed in proportion to its magnitude and demerit.—This view of things naturally brings me to the fourth and laſt obſervation;

IV. That it becomes every wiſe and good man, every one that fears God and loves his country, where ſuch violations of the Divine law are open and avowed, to exert himſelf with vigour in every lawful, peaceable, and prudent method, in order to ſuppreſs ſo flagrant a procedure; that the threatened puniſhment may be averted, and the rights

rights of humanity and juſtice held ſacred and inviolable.

It is ſuppoſed in this remark, that in every nation there are wiſe and good men;—men that fear God and love their country. Whenever then it appears to ſuch perſons, that the law of nations is openly violated,—that ſuch a conduct is ſanctioned by acts of the legiſlature,—that it has long been perſiſted in, and a ſtrong oppoſition is made to all attempts for a reformation;—ſurely it becomes thoſe perſons who ſee things in this light to exert themſelves with vigour, to oppoſe, and if poſſible to exterminate, ſo criminal and deſtructive a practice.

In this light, has that branch of Britiſh commerce which extends to the human ſpecies, long been viewed, by many of the inhabitants of this country. In this light, I have no doubt, it would have been viewed by many more, had they been apprized of its dreadful nature. And now, ſince it is more generally known, by the recent publication of many well-authenticated facts in different pamphlets, it is generally regarded as an iniquitous and a diſgraceful traffic, which ought to be doomed to utter annihilation. Hence the public attention has been excited to a conſiderable degree, ſo that petitions have been preſented, from almoſt every part of the kingdom, to their repreſentatives in Parliament, to take the affair under their conſideration. There is then every

reaſon

reaſon to believe that it will undergo a full, fair, and mature diſcuſſion, unſhackled by local and ſelf-intereſted views. Two opinions have, indeed, been entertained on the ſubject: ſome have thought that it needs to be regulated only; but the almoſt general opinion, and which I hope you adopt as your own, is, that it ought entirely to be put a ſtop to. All however are agreed that it ought not to remain in its preſent predicament. The object I would wiſh *you* to purſue, and to uſe your utmoſt influence to attain, is, the abolition, the perfect and entire abolition of this odious branch of Britiſh commerce.

Some of you perhaps will aſk "In what way "muſt we exert that influence?" And you will probably add, "We have no perſonal concern in the "commerce ourſelves, nor are any of us inveſted "with the character of Legiſlators: we are moſt "of us fixed in the lower ſtations of life, and of "courſe our influence is very inconſiderable." Admitting this, ſtill every individual can do ſomething. You can, for inſtance, unite with others in petitioning the Houſe of Commons, if any thing of that kind ſhould hereafter be deemed neceſſary: you can contribute a little of your property towards defraying the expence which neceſſarily attends a procedure of this kind, eſpecially where a ſtrong oppoſition is made to it: and you can preſent your addreſſes to the God of juſtice and mercy, eſpecially when the affair comes under the

the deliberation of the Legiſlature, that he would inſpire the hearts of our rulers with juſt and humane ſentiments, and incline them to unite in the entire demolition of ſo crying an evil.

It gives me much pleaſure that I can, on good authority, inform thoſe of you, who are not already apprized of the fact, that a gentleman of this town, lately its repreſentative in Parliament, but now a repreſentative for the county of York, has engaged (if health permit) to bring the ſubject forward to the eye of the legiſlature, in the courſe of the preſent ſeſſion; and from the known philanthropy of the gentleman referred to, there is I think no reaſon to doubt, but he will give his decided opinion that ſo iniquitous and inhuman a traffic ſhould be totally exterminated. He will never approve in the character of a ſenator, what muſt be abhorrent to his feelings as a man.

Beſides, in the courſe of ſome debates which took place in the Houſe of Commons, during the laſt ſeſſion, reſpecting the treatment of the unhappy captives, on their tranſportation from the coaſt of Africa to their deſtined places of ſlavery, ſome leading members openly declared, "That "the ſlave trade ought not to be regulated but "deſtroyed,—that it ought to be aboliſhed on "principles of humanity and juſtice,—that to the "memory of former parliaments, the horrors of "this traffic would be an eternal reproach,—

"that

" that to allow its exiſtence was to allow the Afri-
" cans to be robbed of all things but life; and
" the object then before the houſe was, that they
" might not be unneceſſarily deprived of life too,
" —and that the trade, as it had been carried on,
" and was propoſed to be carried on by the per-
" ſons concerned in it, was contrary to every hu-
" mane, every Chriſtian principle, and to every ſen-
" timent which ought to inſpire the breaſt of man*."

When therefore the matter comes to be fully inveſtigated, and the injuſtice and cruelty neceſſarily attendant on ſo vile a traffic, even when conducted in the beſt manner it will poſſibly admit of, properly ſtated, there is, I flatter myſelf, every reaſon to hope, from the juſtice, the humanity, and the regard for liberty which characterize the Britiſh legiſlators, that they will effectually deſtroy ſo infamous a commerce; and thus remove a juſtly merited ſtigma from themſelves, as well as from the nation at large.—Still however I would intreat you to exert your influence in every peaceable and prudent way, till the affair be brought to a final concluſion: till " a traffic which
" is not leſs diſguſting to the reaſon, than hateful
" to the feelings of our nature; a traffic which
" exiſts but by human ſuffering, and the gains of
" which are conſtantly polluted with blood;" till ſuch a hideous traffic be aboliſhed for ever.—To engage you to purſue this object, I will preſent

* See the parliamentary Regiſter, from MAY to AUGUST, 1788.

to your view a few motives, which I hope will appear of conſiderable force, and produce the deſired effect.

Motives there are, and of the nobleſt kind too, to prompt every compaſſionate man, much more every Chriſtian, of whatever denomination (for in ſuch a cauſe all denominations perfectly unite) to exert himſelf in behalf of his oppreſſed brethren. Motives, drawn from the univerſal goodneſs of God, which diffuſes itſelf thro' every part of the earth:——from his ſpecial mercy revealed in the goſpel, which will ſooner or later be publiſhed among all the nations of the world:—from the benevolent deſign of the Saviour's appearance among men, and the obligations we are under to promote that deſign:—from the conſcious ſatisfaction of having done our duty, even tho' the iſſue ſhould prove unfavourable:—and, finally, from the deſire we muſt naturally have, if properly diſpoſed, to tranſmit the bleſſings we enjoy, civil and religious, not only to our more immediate, but if poſſible to our moſt diſtant poſterity.

The goodneſs of God is univerſal in its extent, and durable in its exerciſe. "The Lord is good "to all,"*—to the inhabitants of one country, as well as to thoſe of another: it is unremitting in its exerciſe;—for, the expreſſions of it are "new

* Pſalm, cxlv. 9.

"new every morning," and it "endureth conti-
"nually." Among other inſtances of Divine goodneſs this is one,—That the inhabitants of the different parts of the globe, whether of the icy mountains of Lapland, or the ſultry plains of Africa, eſteem their own country in preference to any other, from a perſuaſion that it is the moſt calculated to promote their happineſs. There they were born and nurtered,—there their kindred attachments are formed,—there the ſentiments and manners prevail, which are the moſt congenial with their own;—and, by conſequence, there they will enjoy the greateſt ſatisfaction. Divine goodneſs, moreover, extends its hand to relieve the wants of all: it gives to every people "rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons;" and thus, by diſpenſing its bounties, fills "their "hearts with food and gladneſs."

This conſideration then of the kindneſs of our Common Father to the whole of his offspring, however widely diſperſed in the earth, ſhould engage us to be imitators of him, by endeavouring, as far as lies in our power, to diffuſe happineſs among our fellow-men. Now ſo far as we exert ourſelves to ſupply their wants, to relieve their diſtreſſes, and to furniſh them with the means of happineſs, we act like God, and in the manner that his children are required to act. Such a conduct both gives dignity to man, and opens to him a ſource of the moſt rational enjoyment.

Whereas,

Whereas, an oppoſite procedure proves us to be the children of a very different father, fixes the deepeſt diſgrace on our nature, and ſooner or later will certainly be productive of the keeneſt miſery.

The general intereſt therefore which is at preſent taken, in behalf of the ſuffering Africans, by numbers in this nation who are acquainted with their ſufferings, is in itſelf a pleaſing object; as it ſhews that a regard to the rights of humanity and juſtice, however they may be partially violated, ſtill prevails in a conſiderable degree. It proves that there are yet numbers among us, who not only value liberty themſelves, but wiſh to extend it to mankind in general. Happy were this univerſally the caſe! were there none ſo baſe, ſo ſordid, ſo callous to every generous feeling, as to be perpetually deſtroying the happineſs of men, to gratify their inſatiable thirſt of avarice! With regard to combinations of men of this caſt, what humane and generous mind would not adopt that ancient ſoliloquy, "O my ſoul come not thou "into their ſecret, unto their aſſembly mine ho-"nour be not thou united."

But, how great ſoever the general goodneſs of God towards mankind be, his ſpecial mercy revealed in the goſpel, is a favour ſuperadded. The very goſpel itſelf is a gracious proviſion, made by the God of mercy, for the relief of the guilty and the miſerable. Its voice is directed

to

to the "wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and "blind, and naked." It proclaims "peace, peace, "to him that is far off, and to him that is near." It is equally calculated for the happineſs of one people as well as of another, as all the nations of the earth are equally involved in guilt and miſery. And tho' it be not at preſent univerſally publiſhed, yet the time will come when it ſhall diffuſe its bleſſings, "from the riſing of the ſun even to "the going down of the ſame."

Every nation, then, favoured with the light of the goſpel, ſhould be ſolicitous to extend it to others. If they value it themſelves,—if they really believe it to be a revelation of pardon and peace, adapted to the circumſtances of guilty and impoveriſhed men, ought they not in their intercourſe with other nations, who at preſent "ſit in darkneſs and in the region of the ſhadow "of death," to convey to them, if poſſible, ſo ineſtimable a bleſſing, and ſpread its contents full in their view? But can this be done by any nation which is exciting civil wars among others, and ſetting them at variance one with another, that the vanquiſhed party may be purchaſed by them, and ſold again to ſtrangers in a foreign land? Can the goſpel be recommended to the attention of men, while you are thus buying and ſelling them as tho' they were brutes? To be depriving a people of their natural liberty, and at the ſame time preaching to them ſpiritual liberty,

would

would appear ſuch groſs hypocriſy, ſuch an inſult on the underſtandings of men, that it would be held in the higheſt deteſtation.

For inſtance, as the caſe ſtands at preſent between us and thoſe various nations of Africa where our execrable commerce extends,—Could the beſt-intentioned miniſter of the goſpel, in the character of an Engliſhman, with any proſpect of ſucceſs, publiſh the glad tidings of peace to them? I am of opinion he could not. When he ſaw the deeds of violence,—when he heard the ſhrieks of woe,—when his ear was pierced with appeals from oppreſſed and miſerable captives to the God of truth and juſtice, for vengeance to be executed on the Europeans in general, and on the Engliſh in particular, his tongue would faulter, his book would fall from his hand, and he would be ready to ſigh that he ſtood connected with a country ſo juſtly degraded, and which took a leading part in the infliction ſo much miſery.

Were ſuch a miniſter, indeed, to be reproached with this conduct of his countrymen, by any of the much-injured Africans, he might, and probably he would, reply, Alas! a conſiderable part of my countrymen know nothing of theſe ſcenes of woe that are before my eyes, your cries never reached their ears; otherwiſe they would certainly compaſſionate your ſufferings, for they are men of generous ſentiments, and ever ready to relieve the wretched. But there are many others of

them

them who have the means of information, and are well acquainted with your caſe; theſe pity you, pray for you, and are ready to do you any office of kindneſs ſo far as their power extends. Nay, even at this preſent moment, many are intereſting themſelves in your behalf:—they are petitioning their rulers, who are renowned in their own country for juſtice and humanity, that they would conſider your miſerable ſituation, and reſtrain thoſe of our countrymen by the ſtrong hand of power, who are ſo loſt to all ſenſe of their duty both to God and to you, as to be actively concerned in reducing you to ſlavery. And he might add, When this is effected, as I truſt it ſhortly will, then I doubt not but you will lend your attention to the meſſage I have to deliver; for, I am fully perſuaded, that *that* God "whoſe I am and whom I ſerve", and who is "rich" in mercy "to all that call on him," has mercy in reſerve for you; and the period is at no great diſtance, when your country ſhall be favoured with the important bleſſings, which mine has long enjoyed.—If ever then you mean to ſpread the goſpel of peace, wipe off this ſtain of infamy from the Chriſtian name.

Beſides, the benevolent deſign of the Saviour's appearance among men, ſhould induce all thoſe who are acquainted with it, to uſe their utmoſt influence to promote that deſign.—For what purpoſe did the Son of God viſit our world, and appear as a man among men? Was it "to con-

"demn

"demn the world," or "to deſtroy men's lives?" No. He came "not to deſtroy, but to ſave: to "ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt." Of him it was predicted, long before his appearance in the world, "The ſpirit of the Lord God is upon me, "becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach "good tidings to the meek, he hath ſent me to "bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty "to the captives, and the opening of the priſon "to them that are bound, to proclaim the ac-"ceptable year of the Lord*."

The liberty, indeed, which Jeſus proclaims, is ſpiritual in its nature, and the fetters he knocks of are thoſe of ignorance and error, vice and miſery: but then it was evidently a part of his plan, to relieve the wretchedneſs of men as it relates to this preſent world. He "went about doing "good" both to the bodies and to the ſouls of men; and in this, as well as in other things, hath ſet us an example, that we "ſhould follow his ſteps." The doctrines he taught, and the duties he inculcated, all operate this way. Even the ſingle idea of conſidering all men as our *neighbours* and *brethren*, which he has taught us to adopt, has done more towards the eſtabliſhment of human happineſs, than all the laboured ſyſtems with which the world had ever been acquainted. It has reſtored in ſome meaſure the natural equality of men, and has taught us to reſpect the rights of humanity; ſo that tho' the terms *maſter* and *ſervant* are retained,

* Iſaiah, lxi. 1, 2.

retained, and muſt be retained in every civilized ſociety, yet the odious appellation of *ſlave*, is almoſt extinct in thoſe countries that are called Chriſtian, and eſpecially in thoſe that are denominated Proteſtant ones. All who adopt this idea, conſider their fellow-men as equals in one, and that the moſt important ſenſe, tho' they be inferior in another; and all who believe the Chriſtian revelation, muſt at the ſame time believe, that even thoſe inferiors, if they acquit themſelves better in this preſent ſtate, will have the ſuperiority in the future world.

Such was the benevolent deſign then, which the Son of God had in view, when he viſited our world and dwelt among men. When we conſider this deſign, we ſee the propriety of his being ſtiled "The Deſire of all nations," and "The "Saviour of the world;" we ſee that it was a deſign worthy of infinite wiſdom to form, and the object of which was human happineſs.—And ſhall we not fall in with this deſign? Shall we not endeavour to extend the knowledge of it? Yes, let all the world know, even thoſe that are in the moſt abject condition, that conſolation is provided for them. Propagate the knowledge of the Saviour among the uninſtructed inhabitants of Africa, as well as among others; but let it be in a language that they underſtand: let it be propagated by acts of kindneſs, and not degraded by acts of cruelty.

Again, the conſcious ſatisfaction of having done our duty, even tho' the iſſue ſhould prove unfavourable, ſhould excite us to exert ourſelves for the relief of the oppreſſed.—The general voice of the nation at preſent calls for the abolition of African ſlavery; and they requeſt this from a conviction, that it is equally inhuman and unjuſt. Now to plead the cauſe of injured innocence, and to attempt the reſcue of unhappy ſufferers from the violent graſp of tyranny, is to exert ourſelves in a cauſe which may be reflected on with pleaſure. A ſatisfaction attends the attempt itſelf: if the object be attained it will afford an additional degree of pleaſure: and even if we ultimately fail in this, yet our having attempted it only, will always prove ſatisfactory in the review. Whatever then may be done in the affair we are conſidering, when it comes under the inveſtigation of our auguſt legiſlators, thoſe who have contributed to bring it before them, will have the "anſwer of a good conſcience."

To conclude: the deſire we muſt naturally have, if properly diſpoſed, to tranſmit the bleſſings we enjoy, civil and religious, not only to our immediate, but even to our remote deſcendants, ſhould engage us to maintain rectitude and humanity in our conduct, with all to whom our tranſactions extend. The national bleſſings we enjoy are many and great: they have been long continued to us: and tho' we had a ſucceſſion of Princes before the

memorable

memorable period of the Revolution, who were eagerly graſping at arbitrary power, and aiming to deprive us of our deareſt rights, yet, by that important event, our liberty and privileges were fixed on a firmer baſis than ever they had ſtood on before that æra.

But as our liberty and proſperity have increaſed at home, has not our national power been increaſingly exerted abroad; and that, not for the protection of freedom, not for the relief of the oppreſſed, not to do good to men, either with regard to their temporal or eternal intereſts,—but rather to ſpread deſolation and miſery in all the three great continents, of Africa, Aſia, and America? Have we not acted thus at the expence of juſtice, mercy, national honour, and every principle that we ought to hold ſacred, as men, Britons, and Chriſtians? How aſtoniſhing, that thoſe who are juſt, and benevolent, and jealous of the rights of men being invaded, at home,—whoſe government and laws are the admiration and the envy of other nations, ſhould pay little or no regard to any of thoſe principles, in the commercial tranſactions they have with others! But is not ſuch a conduct an abuſe of power and proſperity? And if it be true that "righteouſneſs "exalteth a nation,"—raiſes them above other nations as objects of the Divine regard; it is not leſs true, that "ſin is a reproach to any people,"—it ſinks them below the favourable notice

of

of the Almighty Ruler; and, if not repented of, will certainly terminate in their ruin.

What will our diſtinguiſhed privileges avail, if we are either the ſlaves of iniquity ourſelves, or exert our power for reducing a people who have never offended us, to the moſt abject of all poſſible ſituations? In this caſe, Will not our ſuperior privileges be an aggravation of our guilt? Shall we not juſtly forfeit them to the Supreme Governor, to whom we have hitherto been indebted for their long continuance?

Aboliſh, then, ſo infamous, ſo deſtructive a commerce. No longer enſlave an unoffending people. Inform the inhabitants of Africa, that you have done them an injury,—that you have violated the law of nations,—and that you will no longer perſiſt in ſuch a procedure.—Inform the unhappy ſlaves in the various iſlands, that the injury you have done them is irreparable; but, that you are willing to make every compenſation within your power. That you will put them under the protection of equal law, provide means for their inſtruction in the knowledge of Chriſtianity, and raiſe them to the enjoyment of freedom, as ſoon as the circumſtances of their caſe will admit. Thus will "the bleſſing of him that was ready to "periſh" come on you; and you will cauſe the heart, even of ſlaves, "to ſing for joy."

THE END OF THE SERMON.

As it was thought that the preceding Sermon might fall into the hands of ſome perſons who have not read any of the publications referred to in it,—the following Extracts are added, with a view to give thoſe perſons an idea, both in what manner this unnatural Commerce is in general conducted, and the ſhocking conſequences that muſt reſult from its continuation.

The general State of the Trade:

"THE Slave Trade may be ſaid to begin at the great River Senegal, and to extend to the farther limits of Angola, a diſtance of many thouſand miles.

"The trade is at preſent confined to the Engliſh, Dutch, Danes, Portugueſe, and French. The Engliſh, in the year 1786, employed one hundred and thirty ſhips, and carried off about forty-two thouſand ſlaves. Theſe were fitted out from the ports of London, Briſtol, and Leverpool; the latter of which ſent out ninety veſſels alone."

Methods of procuring Slaves:

"The unhappy ſlaves, who are thus annually taken from their native land, may be divided into various claſſes.

"The moſt conſiderable, and that which contains at leaſt *half* of the whole number tranſported, conſiſts of kidnapped people. Many of the Africans, who have been inticed by the Europeans, and have come on board their veſſels in confi-

dence, have been detained and carried off. Others have been invited to a conference on the ſhore. A puncheon of ſpirits has been opened to entertain them, and as ſoon as they have drank to intoxication, they have been ſeized, and forced, in that helpleſs and unguarded ſituation, to the ſhips.

"But the number of Africans, that are annually kidnapped by the Europeans, bears no ſort of compariſon with the number of thoſe, that are kidnapped by their own countrymen.

"The ſecond order of ſlaves, and by no means inconſiderable, conſiſts of thoſe, whoſe villages have been depopulated to obtain them. This practice prevails much in the inland country, and is practiſed in different ways, according as the Princes are more or leſs deſpotic.

"The latter, apprehenſive of ſome reſiſtance on the part of their ſubjects, are obliged to be more cautious. They uſually aſſemble their guards, and viſit the villages, which are to become the objects of their avarice, in the night. Having ſurrounded them, and ſet them on fire, they ſeize ſuch of the inhabitants as are endeavouring to eſcape from the flames, and either ſend them to a neighbouring market to be ſold, or ſell them to the different black traders, who are conſtantly travelling through their dominions.

"The third claſs conſiſts of ſuch, as have been ſaid to be convicted of crimes. The Africans, before they were viſited by the Europeans, puniſhed their delinquents much in the ſame manner as other people in the ſame ſtage of ſociety; but, ſince the introduction of the Slave Trade, *all* crimes have been puniſhed with ſlavery.

"The fourth claſs conſiſts of priſoners of war.

"Theſe are of two ſorts. The firſt comprehends ſuch, as are the effects of wars, that have originated in common cauſes. The great Princes of Africa, like the Princes of Europe, are ambitious, jealous—fond of increaſing their revenue, their territory, or their power. Theſe, therefore, engage in war from the ſame motives as other Sovereigns, and ſell their priſoners.—The ſecond comprehends ſuch, as are the effects of wars, that have been made ſolely for the purpoſe of obtaining them,

them. Theſe, in point of number, greatly exceed the former. The Princes, who engage in ſuch ſkirmiſhes, are generally the chieftains of ſmall tribes. As ſoon as the ſails of a veſſel appear, they prepare for the attack. The inhabitants of the windward coaſt, who live in ſmall communities, perfectly unconnected with, and detached from, each other, are particularly to be included in this deſcription."

Clarkſon's Eſſay on Slavery.

MANNER OF CONDUCTING THEM TO THE SHIPS.

"Slave merchants collect themſelves into companies, and forming a ſpecies of caravans, in the ſpace of two or three hundred leagues, they conduct ſeveral files of thirty or forty ſlaves, all laden with water and corn, which are neceſſary to their ſubſiſtence in thoſe barren deſerts through which they paſs. The manner of ſecuring them, without much incommoding their march, is ingeniouſly contrived: A fork of wood, from eight to nine feet long, is put round the neck of each ſlave; a pin of iron, riveted, ſecures the fork at the back part, in ſuch a manner, that the head cannot diſengage itſelf: the handle of the fork, the wood of which is very heavy, falls before, and ſo embarraſſes the perſon who is tied to it, that though he hath his arms and legs at liberty, he can neither walk, nor lift up the fork. When they get ready for their march, they range the ſlaves on the ſame line, and ſupport and tie the extremity of each fork on the ſhoulder of the foremoſt ſlave, and proceed in this manner from one to another, till they come to the firſt, the extremity of whoſe fork is carried by one of the guides. Few reſtraints are impoſed that are not felt by the perſons who impoſe them. In order that theſe traders may enjoy the refreſhment of ſleep without uneaſineſs, they tie the arms of every ſlave to the tail of the fork which he carries. In this condition he can neither run away, nor make any attempt to recover his liberty.—Theſe precautions have been found indiſpenſible, becauſe, if the ſlave can but break his chain, he becomes free.

"Reader, while thou art peruſing this horrid account, is not thy ſoul filled with the ſame indignation, as I experience in writing it?—Doſt thou not, in imagination, ruſh with fury upon thoſe infamous conductors?—Doſt thou not break thoſe forks with which theſe unfortunate people are confined?—And doſt thou not reſtore them to their liberty?"

Abbé Raynal's Hiſtory of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies.

TREATMENT ON BOARD THE SHIPS:

"As we dare not truſt them, we receive them on board, from the firſt, as enemies: and before their number exceeds, perhaps, ten or fifteen, they are all put in irons;—in moſt ſhips, two and two together. And frequently, they are not thus confined, as they might, moſt conveniently, ſtand or move, the right hand and foot of one to the left of the other; but acroſs, that is, the hand and foot of each on the ſame ſide, whether right or left, are fettered together: ſo that they cannot move, either hand or foot, but with great caution, and with perfect conſent. Thus they muſt ſit, walk, and lie, for many months, (ſometimes for nine or ten) without any mitigation or relief, unleſs they are ſick.

"When the Women and Girls are taken on board a ſhip, naked, trembling, terrified, perhaps almoſt exhauſted with cold, fatigue, and hunger, they are often expoſed to the wanton rudeneſs of white Savages. The poor creatures cannot underſtand the language they hear, but the looks and manner of the ſpeakers, are ſufficiently intelligible. In imagination, the prey is divided, upon the ſpot, and only reſerved till opportunity offers. Where reſiſtance, or refuſal, would be utterly in vain, even the ſolicitation of conſent is ſeldom thought of. But I forbear."

Newton's Thoughts on the African Slave Trade.

"When put on board the ſhip, the poor unhappy wretches are chained to each other hand and foot, and ſtowed ſo cloſe, that they are not allowed above a foot and a half each individual. Thus crammed together, like herrings in a barrel, they

they generate putrid diſorders, and all ſort of dangerous diſeaſes; ſo that when their overſeers come to look over them in the morning, they have daily to pick numbers of dead ſlaves out of their rows, and to unchain their carcaſſes from the bodies of their wretched fellow-ſufferers, to whom they have been faſtened."

Sir William Dolben.

"The Africans are packed between decks on platforms, like books on ſhelves, and are thought to be perfectly at their eaſe, if they have juſt room enough to turn."

Earl Stanhope.

"Is the preſent mode of tranſportation compatible with a due regard to the lives and healths of the Africans? What has been the evidence at your bar? What the language of the witneſſes?—They told you, that five feet ſix inches in length, and ſixteen inches in breadth, was as much as their practice, upon an average, allotted to each ſlave; that this ſpace was all the room they could allow for the African and his irons; and that in order to accommodate him to this extent, which they deſcribe as liberal, recourſe is had to every poſſible contrivance. In the firſt place, the lower deck is entirely covered with bodies; in the next, the height between the floor of that deck and the roof above (a height which they acknowledge ſeldom amounts to five feet eight inches) is divided by a platform, which is alſo covered with bodies. Thus the diſtance from the floor on which ſome of the Africans are laid, to the platform on which others are ſpread, is but two feet in many caſes, and but two feet and a few inches in the reſt; and from the platform to the upper deck, which conſtitutes the roof, there is but a ſimilar ſpace.—The ſame ingenuity of package, and perfection of contrivance, is employed according to the witneſſes' account, in filling every other part of the veſſel in which a human body can be ſtowed. Such is the mode of conveyance. Now, what from the evidence of the witneſſes at your bar, (an evidence given with reluctance, on a croſs examination, and therefore of deciſive credibility)

is the effect of that conveyance on the lives and health, both of the negroes and the ſeamen? "I do confeſs, (ſays one of the witneſſes) that when I was maſter of the Tartar, I "loſt, in one voyage, a third of my ſeamen, and 120 negroes, "which was alſo a third of the whole." Was this the total of your loſs?—"I cannot ſay it was; twelve negroes periſhed "by an accident; they were drowned." Had you no other mortality, except that of the 120 negroes, and that of the twelve?—"No other upon the voyage; but I loſt between 20 "and 30 negroes, by different diſeaſes, before I left the coaſt."

Mr. Beaufoy.

See Parliamentary Regiſter, 1788.

TREATMENT AT THE PLACE OF SALE:

"They are ſubmitted to the inſpection of thoſe, who are in want of labourers for their farms, who do not fail to examine and treat them with an inhumanity, at which even Avarice ought to bluſh.

"To this mortifying circumſtance, to which the wretched Africans are obliged to ſubmit, is added another, that they are picked out, as the purchaſer pleaſes, without any conſideration, whether friends or relations are parted. In a lot of ſlaves, which was thus expoſed to ſale, were an huſband, wife, and child, in all probability a part of the hapleſs remnant of a village which had been depopulated to obtain them. It did not ſuit the purchaſer to buy them all. Cruel taſk! to ſeparate them for ever!—In vain did they remonſtrate, by every ſign and geſture that could be made. They embraced each other—they would not part—but the laſh ſevered them from their embraces. The unhappy man, on looking round him the next day, ſaw an opportunity of putting a period to his life. He embraced it, and, in a few minutes, was no more."

Clarkſon's Eſſay.

TREATMENT IN THE PLANTATIONS.

"The diſcipline of a ſugar plantation is as exact as that of a regiment: at four o'clock in the morning, the plantation-bell

bell rings to call the ſlaves into the field. Their work is to manure, dig, and hoe, plow the ground, to plant, weed, and cut the cane, to bring it to the mill, to have the juice expreſſed, and boiled into ſugar. About nine o'clock, they have half an hour for breakfaſt, which they take in the field. Again they fall to work, and, according to the cuſtom of the plantation, continue until eleven o'clock, or noon; the bell then rings, and the ſlaves are diſperſed in the neighbourhood, to pick up about the fences, in the mountains, and fallow or waſte grounds, natural graſs and weeds for the horſes and cattle. The time allotted for this branch of work, and preparation of dinner, varies from an hour and an half, to three hours.

"At one, or in ſome plantations, at two o'clock, the bell ſummons them to deliver in the tale of their graſs, and aſſemble to their field work. If the overſeer thinks their bundles too ſmall, or if they come too late with them, they are puniſhed with a number of ſtripes from four to ten. Some maſters, under a fit of carefulneſs for their cattle, have gone as far as fifty ſtripes, which effectually diſable the culprit for weeks. If a ſlave has no graſs to deliver in, he keeps away out of fear, ſkulks about in the mountains, and is abſent from his work often for months; an aggravation of his crime, which, when he is caught, he is made to remember.

"About half an hour before ſun-ſet, they may be found ſcattered again over the land, like the Iſraelites in Egypt, to cull, blade by blade, from among the weeds, their ſcanty parcels of graſs. About ſeven o'clock in the evening, or later, according to the ſeaſon of the year, when the overſeer can find leiſure, they are called over by liſt, to deliver in their ſecond bundles of graſs; and the ſame puniſhment, as at noon, is inflicted on the delinquents. They then ſeparate, to pick up, in their way to their huts, (if they have not done it, as they generally do, while gathering graſs) a little bruſh wood, or dry cow-dung, to prepare ſome ſimple meſs for ſupper, and to-morrow's breakfaſt. This employs them till near midnight,

night, and then they go to ſleep, till the bell calls them in the morning."

Ramſay's Eſſay on the Treatment of African Slaves.

THE DESIRE OF THE SLAVES FOR LIBERTY.

"I am a friend to the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, and think it highly neceſſary that the Houſe ſhould, as ſoon as poſſible, come to ſome deciſion on the ſubject: As the news of the intention of the Legiſlature to adopt ſome meaſures in their favour, has reached the Weſt-India iſlands, and unleſs aſcertained, the poor creatures hopes may be raiſed too high, and bad conſequences may follow. I have lately heard from the Iſland of Grenada; and there the ſlaves are ſo full of the ſubject, that the common exclamation among them is,—Mr. Wilberforce for negro! Mr. Fox for negro! The Parliament for negro! God Almighty for negro!"

Sir James Johnſtone. Parliamentary Regiſter.

A REFLECTION ON THE SUBJECT.

"All Europe hath, for this century paſt, been filled with the moſt ſublime, and the ſoundeſt ſentiments of morality. Writings, which will be immortal, have eſtabliſhed, in the moſt affecting manner, that all men are brethren. We are filled with indignation at the cruelties, either civil, or religious, of our ferocious anceſtors, and we turn our eyes from thoſe ages of horror and blood. Thoſe among our neighbours, whom the inhabitants of Barbary have loaden with irons, obtain our pity and aſſiſtance. Even imaginary diſtreſſes draw tears from our eyes, both in the ſilent retirement of the cloſet, and eſpecially at the theatre. It is only the fatal deſtiny of the Negroes which doth not concern us. They are tyrannized, mutilated, burnt, and put to death; and yet we liſten to theſe accounts coolly, and without emotion. The torments of a people, to whom we owe our luxuries, can never reach our hearts."

10 FE 58

Abbé Raynal's Hiſtory.